

2025-2026 NORTH BRANCH AREA SCHOOLS

PARENT/STUDENT ATHLETIC HANDBOOK



Go Broncos!

Approved _____ per Policy 2550

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The North Branch Area School District believes that a dynamic program of student activities is vital to the educational development of the student.

The following statements have been created to serve as a guide for shaping, developing, and processing all decisions made with regard to our athletic program:

1. We believe that our athletic program is designed and run for North Branch student-athletes.
2. We believe athletics and academics go hand in hand in providing learning opportunities for student-athletes.
3. We believe that athletics is a cooperative effort among students, coaches, staff, parents, and the community.
4. We believe participation in Athletics develops positive life skills.
5. We believe in the pursuit of excellence.
6. We believe that good sportsmanship will be taught, modeled, and expected.
7. We believe that all students will be given the opportunity for meaningful participation in the athletic activities.
8. We believe that sports learning must be developmentally appropriate and coordinated throughout the programs.

ATHLETIC MISSION STATEMENT

Developmental learning through meaningful participation for as many students as possible.

GOALS OF DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

1. **TECHNIQUE** – learning and performing motor skills for playing that sport.
2. **TACTICAL** – knowing when and how to use the various techniques.
3. **LEGAL** – knowledge of the rules and basic officiating procedures.
4. **PHYSICAL** – athletes trained so they are physically prepared for practices and contests.
5. **MENTAL** – athletes trained so they are psychologically prepared for practices and contests.
6. **LIFE SKILLS** – cooperation through teamwork and commitment to the team, pursuit of excellence, take responsibility for failure and use it as a learning opportunity, sportsmanship and respect for others, and effective drug prevention message.

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ATHLETES

GOVERNING RULES: Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) rules must be followed as minimal regulations where more stringent district, league, school, or team rules are not specified.

1. MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (MHSAA) ELIGIBILITY FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. To be eligible to represent your school in interscholastic athletics:

- a. **ENROLLMENT** – To be eligible for interscholastic athletics during the first and second trimester of the school year, a student must be enrolled in a high school not later than the fourth Friday after Labor Day. To be eligible for interscholastic athletics during the third trimester of the school year, a student must be enrolled in a high school not later than the fourth Friday of February.
- b. **AGE – HIGH SCHOOL** – You must be under nineteen (19) years of age at time of contest unless your nineteenth (19th) birthday occurs on or after September 1 of the current year.
- c. **PHYSICAL EXAMINATION** – No student shall be eligible to represent a high school or junior high school for whom there is not on file in the Athletic Office, a statement for the current school (dated on or after April 15th of the previous school year), certifying that the student has passed a physical examination and is physically able to compete in athletic practices and contests.
- d. **MAXIMUM COMPETITION** – A student, once enrolled in grade 9 shall be allowed to compete in only four first, four second, and four third trimesters.
- e. **MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT** – A student shall not compete in athletics that has been enrolled in grades nine to twelve (9-12), inclusive, for more than twelve (12) trimesters. The 10th, 11th, and 12th trimesters must be consecutive. Enrollment in a school beyond the fourth Friday after Labor Day of the first trimester or the fourth Friday of the second or third trimesters, or competing in one or more interscholastic athletic scrimmages or contests, shall be considered as enrollment for a trimester.
- f. **TRANSFERS** – All student transfers will be in accordance with Michigan High School Athletic Association Transfer Policies. Questions concerning transfers should be directed to the Athletic Director's office.
- g. **AWARDS** – You must not accept any award for athletic performance other than an emblematic award. The value of the emblematic award may not exceed forty dollars (\$40.00).

- h. **AMATEUR PRACTICE** – After once representing a MHSAA member school in competition in any sport, a student shall not be eligible to represent his or her high school if that student receives money or other valuable consideration from any source for participating in athletics, or for having signed a professional athletic contract.
- i. **LIMITED TEAM MEMBERSHIP** – A student who, after practicing with (including tryouts) or participating in an athletic contest or scrimmage as a member of a high school athletic team, participates in any athletic competition not sponsored by his or her school in the same sport during the same season, shall become ineligible for a minimum of the next three (3) days of competition and maximum of the remainder of that season in that school year. Please see the athletic director for exceptions that apply to this rule.

2. INDIVIDUAL TEAM RULES AND GUIDELINES

Each coach has the authority to develop additional award requirements and team guidelines for his or her sport, not inconsistent with the school wide rules and procedures. Such rules may address but are not limited to issues such as curfew violations, neglect of equipment, skipping practices, etc. These rules, with consequences, will be subject to the approval of the Building Principal and Athletic Director and presented, in writing, to all team members at the beginning of the season.

3. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT OR PROFANITY

A display of unsportsmanlike conduct toward an opponent, official, or spectator or use of profanity during a practice, scrimmage or contest may result in temporary removal from the activity, a meeting with the coach or Athletic Director, and possible suspension.

4. LOCKER ROOM AND TRANSPORTATION CONDUCT

Inappropriate behavior in locker room/shower area or during team transportation, misuse of athletic facilities or equipment may result in disciplinary action. Any participant in violation may face disciplinary action or financial reimbursement for the damage, a suspension period, or combination of both.

NORTH BRANCH AREA SCHOOLS ATHLETIC TRAINING RULES

1. ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- a. The following behaviors constitute a violation of the North Branch Area School District Athletic Department guidelines and subject the student to penalty as outlined in the “penalties” section of this handbook:
- b. Student athletes are expected to avoid association at activities where the illegal use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco is present. Student athletes must make a conscious effort to immediately leave the area or situation when they realize that illegal activities are taking place in their presence.

- c. Athletes will be disciplined whenever referral is made to the coach and/or building athletic personnel based on (1) being caught in the act by school personnel or authorities; (2) police report or court action brought to the attention of school personnel; (3) self-admittance resulting from investigation of an incident or (4) conclusion reached after an impartial and fair investigation implicating a student-athlete.
- d. Athletes perform best when they follow intelligent training rules that include abstinence from alcohol, drugs and tobacco. Medical research clearly substantiates the fact that use of tobacco, alcohol, and any type of mood modifying substances produce harmful effects on students.
- e. You, as an athlete, have made the choice of representing North Branch Area Schools in interscholastic activities. Being a member of a team is a privilege and with it comes responsibilities. As an athlete of North Branch Area Schools, you are required to abide by these rules when you are a member of an athletic team and throughout your career at North Branch.
- f. Use, possession, concealment, distribution, sale, or being under the influence of any illegal drugs is strictly prohibited, including but not limited to those substances defined as “controlled substances” pursuant to federal and/or state statute:
 - i. Tobacco or tobacco products in any form; or
 - ii. Alcoholic beverages in any form; or
 - iii. Steroids, human growth hormones, or other performance enhancing drugs; or
 - iv. Substances purported to be illegal, abusive, or performance enhancing, i.e., “look-alike” drugs; or
 - v. Chew, cigars, cigarettes, hookah use, inhalants, loose tobacco, devices that emit a vapor (including any product associated with “vaping”), snus, orbs, and strips; or
 - vi. Prescription drugs not prescribed for the student-athlete.
- g. It shall not be a violation of these guidelines for a student to use or possess a prescription or patent drug when taken pursuant to a legal prescription issued by a licensed physician or for which permission to use in the school has been granted pursuant to Board policy. A student shall notify his/her coach if she/he is taking a prescription medicine that may alter the student’s behavior or affect the student’s ability to participate in the activity.

2. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

- a. The student-athlete is a role model for other students and a representative of the School District. Therefore, the student-athlete must not engage in behavior that is inappropriate.
- b. Students shall not engage in acts of inappropriate behavior which school officials consider conduct unbecoming an athlete and a representative of the North Branch Area Schools. Inappropriate behavior may include, but is not limited to, acts of theft, extortion, vandalism, forgery, assault, harassment, sexual misconduct, hazing or initiation of other students, fighting, or gross disrespect. Depending upon the severity of the incident penalties may range from restitution, community service, suspension from athletic competition, dismissal from the squad, or a combination of penalties. School officials will make a

determination on whether the misconduct falls under the penalties in the athletic handbook for inappropriate behavior.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ATHLETES

- a. Social Media has become ingrained in today's society. Using any communication tool in an inappropriate manner can have negative consequences, especially if unkind words or threats are used with the intention of hurting others. North Branch Area Schools recognizes and supports its student-athletes' rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social networks. In this context, each student-athlete must remember that participating and competing for North Branch Area Schools is a privilege, not a right. Student-athletes represent the North Branch Area Schools; therefore, they are expected to portray themselves, their team, and their school in a positive manner at all times. Any on-line postings must be consistent with federal and state laws, as well as North Branch Area District rules and regulations (including those listed below).
- b. **Specifically prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:**
 - i. Sexually explicit, profane, lewd, indecent, illegal, or defamatory language/actions.
 - ii. Derogatory language regarding school personnel or other students.
 - iii. Comments designed to harass or bully students and/or school personnel.
 - iv. Nude, sexually oriented, or indecent photos, images, or altered pictures.
 - v. Re-communication on schools' grounds of the contents of the inappropriate posts.
 - vi. Distribution of hard copies of inappropriate posts.
 - vii. Students accessing inappropriate posts on their own devices.
 - viii. Use of school computers to view inappropriate posts.

4. PENALTIES FOR ALCOHOL, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, SOCIAL MEDIA VIOLATIONS, AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

All penalties for violations of this handbook shall be cumulative. The following penalties shall apply to violations of Athletic Training Rules #1 and #2.

a. FIRST VIOLATION

An athlete will be suspended from a minimum of 1/3 of the remaining consecutive contest dates during the season in which the violation occurs. If the current season is more than 2/3 complete the remaining penalty will carry over to the next completed season of participation. If the violation occurs out-of-season, the athlete will lose eligibility for a minimum of the first 1/3 of the regularly scheduled events in the athlete's next sport season. In either case, if the athlete was suspended for violating a rule pertaining to alcohol and/or substance abuse, the athlete will be required to provide verification of participation and completion of an approved substance intervention/education program before he/she will be reinstated for the next sports season. Any cost for the above mentioned programs is the responsibility of the student. The coach and Athletic Director will make a determination on a case-by-case basis if the student athlete will be expected to participate in all practice sessions and team activities during the period of athletic competition suspension.

b. SECOND VIOLATION

The athlete will lose eligibility to participate in any interscholastic athletic competition for one calendar year from the date of the second violation suspension. In cases involving alcohol and/or substance abuse, verification of participation and completion of an approved substance intervention/education program must be provided before the athlete's eligibility will be reinstated. Any cost for the above-mentioned programs is the responsibility of the student.

c. THIRD VIOLATION

The student-athlete will be dismissed from the athletic program for the remainder of his/her academic career with the North Branch Area Schools.

5. DURATION OF ATHLETIC CODE

These rules and regulations shall apply from the moment the student-athlete declares himself/herself a participant in the athletic program by signing and turning in a completed physical card and consent to participate in athletics form to a representative of the athletic department or by attending the first official practice for a sport. These rules are considered to be in effect from that point throughout the student-athlete's athletic career or until 12 months have passed from the student-athlete's last athletic participation, whichever occurs sooner. These rules and regulations also apply to a student-athlete during vacation periods and during the off-season. Thus, these rules and regulations are not limited to the time period in which the student participates in a particular sport. Nor are these rules and regulations limited to student behavior at school-sponsored activities or while the student-athlete is on School District property.

A student participant and his/her parent or guardian must sign and return to the Athletic Department a form which acknowledges the student and his/her parent or guardian understand and agree to abide by all rules and regulations.

APPEAL PROCESS FOR DISCIPLINED STUDENT-ATHLETES

1. In cases of dispute where a coach has placed penalties on the student-athlete because of the coach's team rules, student-athletes and parents are asked to consult directly with the coach involved to discuss and hopefully resolve the problem.
2. Appeals resulting from penalties determined by the Athletic Director based on the Parent/Student Athletic Handbook should be made directly to the Athletic Director within three school days. The appeal will be heard by the Athletic Director and the building Principal.
3. If matters are not resolved at the building level, within three school days of this decision a student-athlete or parent/guardian may appeal the decision to the Central Administration of the District. The appeal will be heard by the Superintendent or a designate and reviewed by the Superintendent.
4. If matters are not resolved at the Central Administration level, a student-athlete or parent/guardian may appeal the decision to the Board of Education within five days from the decision by the Central Administration of the school district.

SUSPENSION FROM SCHOOL

Any student-athlete suspended from school for violation of the North Branch Area School District Student Code of Conduct will be ineligible to participate in practices, competitions, or any extra-curricular activities for the duration of the suspension. Students are not to be present on school property except by the permission of the administration.

AWARDS FOR DISMISSED ATHLETES

Athletes dismissed from a team will be considered not to have completed the season in good standing or met the award requirement.

TEAM TRAVEL: Student-athletes must travel to and from contests, away from North Branch, in transportation provided by the school. The only exceptions are:

1. Injury to a participant that requires the use of alternative transportation. This can only be done with the approval of the coach.
2. Prior written request that is approved by the Athletic Office or Building Principal, by the student athlete's parent/guardian for the student-athlete to ride with the parent/guardian.
3. In cases of inclement weather where the coach determines that the participant's riding with his/her parent/guardian would reduce the amount of distance that would have to be traveled. At no time is a student-athlete allowed to drive himself/herself to or from a contest outside of North Branch. Further, student-athletes are not permitted to ride to or from contests with another student at any time.
4. The North Branch Area School District does authorize transportation by private vehicle, including transportation with another student's parents, provided any such transportation is approved in advance and in writing by the Principal or Athletic Director in accordance with the Superintendent's administrative guidelines.

ATTENDANCE AT PRACTICES AND CONTESTS

Attendance at a practice session is necessary to properly prepare athletes physically and mentally for athletic contests. All members must be at their scheduled practices at the times designated by the coach. It is foreseeable that there may be a situation, when it is not possible for a participant to attend practice due to illness, injury, required school or special family commitments. In such instances, the participant shall make prior arrangements with the coach for an excused absence. Any absence from team activities where prior notification to the coach has not taken place will be considered an unexcused absence. Participants will be excused from the team practice or games during regular school vacation periods or when a vacation is taken with the student's parents/guardians. Unexcused absences or being late for scheduled practices/games will be handled by the coach and could result in suspension. Missing regular scheduled practice to attend work is an unexcused absence.

SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY PRACTICES

Sundays should remain a day free of student activities. Athletic teams are not allowed to practice or participate in open gym sessions on Sundays unless prior administrative consent has been given. If this situation does occur, practice is considered non-mandatory. The varsity football team will be allowed to meet for film sessions (no practices) on Sunday

evenings to begin preparation for the next week's practices thereby eliminating the need for abnormally lengthy Monday practices. On Wednesday evenings, all practices, team meetings, etc. will be concluded by 6:00 P.M. unless prior administrative consent has been given.

PRACTICES ON INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS

At no time does the North Branch Area Schools demand that a student-athlete place their safety or the safety of anyone else in jeopardy. When practice is scheduled on days that school has been canceled because of inclement weather, practice is considered to be non-mandatory. Student-athletes are to consult with their parents in determining whether it is sensible to attend on such a day. If not attending, it is important to confer with the coach prior to the time of the practice for notification.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ON DAYS OF PRACTICE OR CONTESTS

Student-athletes must be in school in order to practice or participate in contests. If they are well enough to practice or play, they are well enough to come to school. The student-athlete is expected to be in school the entire day in order to participate in a practice or contest that day. Exceptions to this rule and special arrangement for absences must be approved in advance by the building Principal or Athletic Director.

CARE OF EQUIPMENT

Any participant who is issued athletic equipment or uses any athletic equipment owned by the school district will be held financially responsible for the use and care of the assigned or designated athletic equipment. All outstanding equipment/uniform bills owed to the Athletic Department must be settled before further equipment/uniforms will be issued and an athlete is cleared to play another sport. Uniforms should be cleaned or cared for throughout the season, based on coach's instructions.

INJURED ATHLETES

A student-athlete who has been injured and has had medical treatment cannot participate in contests or practice again until the day indicated in a written statement by the evaluating physician. This notification must be on file with the Athletic Office prior to resuming activities with the team. Injured athletes must make arrangements with the coach to understand what their responsibilities are to remain in good standing while injured.

MOVING A STUDENT-ATHLETE UP

Student-athletes are not authorized to be brought up unless prior discussion and consent has taken place with the head coach of the sport and the Athletic Director before addressing the issue with the student-athlete and parents/guardians. Provided agreement has taken place and parent/guardian consent has been given, the final approval must be given by the Athletic Director.

PARTICIPATION IN MORE THAN ONE SPORT IN THE SAME SEASON

Student-athletes are allowed to participate in more than one sport during the same season provided that the following criteria are met:

1. The student-athlete must not have received a grade lower than a "C-" in the previous semester or be receiving a grade lower than a "B-" during the present semester.
2. If the student-athlete drops to a C+ or lower during the season for two consecutive weeks, the student-athlete will be removed from the secondary sport.
3. The sports of participation must be either a "team" sport and "individual" sport or both "individual" sports (exception may be made by the Athletic Director).
4. Both sport coaches must be in agreement.
5. Parental consent must be given.
6. The student-athlete designates a primary sport.
7. Final approval is given after the student-athlete, his/her parents/guardians, coaches, and the Athletic Director sign a contract stating everyone has agreed on the athlete participating in two sports and which is the primary sport.
8. Athletes who quit a primary sport during the season must obtain permission from the primary coach to continue participation in the secondary sport.

NORTH BRANCH AREA SCHOOLS ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

1. Players must have a physical prior to the first organized team activity, practice or tryout. They will not be allowed to participate without a properly signed physical card on file with the Athletic Director.
2. Students must be passing all classes on a weekly check basis to participate in athletic activities.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

1. Students must be passing all classes at the time of each weekly check to be considered eligible to participate in athletics.
2. To be able to participate in athletics, a student shall have passed a minimum of 4 classes at the high school level during the previous trimester. At the middle school level, a student must pass a minimum of 5 classes. According to Michigan High School Athletic Association rules, a student –athlete not passing the minimum number of classes the previous trimester will be ineligible for the next trimester.
3. During the week that the student is ineligible (failing), the student will be allowed to continue practicing in that particular sport but not compete in athletic contests for the week (Monday through Sunday). The athlete is expected to participate in a pre-arranged study plan for the week. A student that is on the warning list is not considered ineligible but struggling academically (C- and below).
4. If the student becomes ineligible for the second consecutive week, the student will not be allowed to practice or participate in athletic contests. (Monday through Sunday). This policy is to be administered by the Athletic Office. The Athletic Office will inform all coaches

regarding the implementing of this policy and will monitor the eligibility of students participating in athletics.

5. If the student remains ineligible for the third consecutive week, the student will not be allowed to participate in games or practice with the team until the student is passing all classes. Once the student passes all classes, he/she may practice the first week back of eligibility and participate in games the second consecutive week of maintaining passing grades.
6. A student mentor or peer tutoring program may be available under the direction of the high school principal and/or designee to assist students in achieving classroom expectations. This option may be offered to any student who may have need of additional assistance. It may be mandatory for any student-athlete in season who is earning a grade below C-. If student mentor or peer-tutoring programs are not available during the season, the athletic department and/or coaching staff may institute study tables for any athlete in season who is earning a grade below C-
7. Middle School eligibility will be administered and handled by the Middle School Office.
8. Evaluation of the student-athlete is to be a cumulative grade from the beginning of the current trimester/semester. This is not a weekly grade check based on 5 days of work.
9. Each coach and student-athlete will then be made aware of any unsatisfactory marks.

POSSIBLE MAKE-UP FOR PREVIOUS TRIMESTER/SEMESTER ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

A student with previous trimester/semester “credit deficiencies” may earn a single “makeup credit” from an approved night school or summer school program. This makeup credit may only be used as an elective credit, and must be for a specific preceding trimester/semester deficient course (i.e., the student may be required to take an English course due to the fact that an English course was failed, but the credit will not count as completion of a required credit). Any such coursework must be approved by the Building Principal prior to the student enrolling in the course. Reinstatement to the eligibility list is only done after a final passing grade has been given and recorded by the school.

INJURY WARNING

1. Although participation in athletics results in many benefits, the possibility of serious physical injury also increases with such participation. In order to prevent athletic injuries, all student-athletes must comply with safety procedures and conditioning programs, as well as correct use of equipment and facilities.
2. No student-athlete shall participate in any phase of the athletic program unless he/she has on file in the school office a physical examination card for the current school year. This card must be signed by a physician, indicating that the student-athlete has passed a physical examination and is able to compete in athletic practices and contests. For the card to be valid, the physical examination must be given after April 15th of the previous school year. As a further condition of participation in the athletic program, a minor’s parent/guardian must also consent to participation. In cases of serious injury or extended illness, school officials reserve the right to require a student-athlete to be re-examined by a physician before returning to participate in interscholastic athletics.

3. Michigan State Public Acts 342 and 343 of 2012 states that all parents and/or students receive Concussion Awareness Information and that they shall acknowledge receipt of educational material by signing an Educational Material Acknowledgement Form. This information and acknowledgement form is included in this handbook on pages 14 and 15.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MEDICAL BILLS

The School District does not assume responsibility for the payment of medical costs, or a portion thereof, incurred as a result of injury relative to participation in the athletic program. All student-athletes are encouraged to obtain insurance coverage relative to medical treatment and costs arising from athletic injuries. Although the School District does not provide such insurance, individual student-athlete accident insurance is available at a nominal fee. Information about the student-athlete accident insurance program can be obtained through the school offices.

PARENT/COACH COMMUNICATION

Both parenting and coaching are extremely challenging vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of each other, providing greater benefit to children. As parents, when your children become involved in our program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

1. Communication You should Expect from Your Son/Daughter's Coach

- a. Philosophy of the coach.
- b. Rules and expectations the coach has for your child and the other players on the squad.
- c. Locations and times of all practices and contests.
- d. Team requirements, i.e., fees, special equipment, off-season conditioning.
- e. Procedure should your child be injured during participation
- f. Discipline that results in the denial of your child's participation.

2. Communications Coaches Expect from Parents

- a. Concerns expressed directly to the coach.
- b. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.
- c. Specific concerns regarding a coach's philosophy, rules and/or expectations.

As your children become involved in the North Branch athletic program, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there may also be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

3. Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with Coaches:

- There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the others position.
- a. The treatment of your child mentally and physically.

- b. Ways to help your child improve so that your child will see more playing time.
- c. Concerns about your child's behavior.

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you may hope. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be best for all students involved.

4. Issues not Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches

- a. While there are certain things which can and should be discussed with your child's coach, there are other things which must be left to the discretion of the coach.
- b. Strategy or play calling
- c. Playing time
- d. Other student-athletes

5. If You Have Concerns To Discuss With the Coach, The Procedure You should Follow...

When parent-coach conferences are necessary, the following procedure should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

- a. Call the high school to set up an appointment with the coach (810) 688-2518
- b. If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletic Director at (810) 688-2518.
- c. Please DO NOT attempt to confront a coach before, during or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for both the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote a resolution.

6. The Next Step

What can a parent do if the meeting with the coach did not provide a satisfactory resolution?

- a. Call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director at (810) 688-2518 to discuss the situation.
- b. At this meeting the appropriate next step can be determined.

7. 24-Hour Rule

- a. North Branch High School and our Athletic coaches have a 24-Hour Rule in place after each game.
- b. Athletics are heavily tied to emotions. Fans, players and coaches often get excited and overly emotional, no matter how much we try not to. There is a time and place to discuss and communicate concerns. Therefore, as you communicate with each other, please remember to do it in a proper format.
- c. The "24-Hour Rule" simply states that coaches will not discuss a game or situation until at least 24-hours after the fact. Please do not approach a coach during or immediately after a game. This important rule does two things. First, it moves the discussion away from the presence of the players. Second, it allows all parties to have time to put things in perspective and "cool off", if necessary.
- d. If parents respect the 24-Hour Rule, their concerns are more likely to be fully addressed in a reasoned discussion. More importantly, the student-athletes enjoyment of a game won't be marred by an ill-timed confrontation.

MANAGING HEAT & HUMIDITY

The MHSAA and North Branch Area Schools has adopted the model policy for managing heat and humidity. Thirty minutes prior to the start of an activity, and again 60 minutes after the start of that activity, temperature and humidity readings will be taken at each site:

If the Heat Index is below 95 degrees:

1. All Sports
 - a. Provide ample amounts of water and breaks. Athletes will be allowed to take in as much water as they desire.
 - b. Ice-down towels for cooling.
 - c. Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.

If the Heat Index is 95-99 degrees:

1. All Sports
 - a. Provide ample amounts of water and breaks. Athletes will be allowed to take in as much water as they desire.
 - b. Ice-down towels for cooling.
 - c. Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.
2. Football: Helmets and other possible equipment removed while not involved in contact.
3. Reduce time of outside activity and consider postponing practice to later in the day.
4. Recheck temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor increased Heat Index.

If the Heat Index is above 99 degrees to 104 degrees:

1. All Sports
 - a. Provide ample amounts of water and breaks. Athletes will be allowed to take in as much water as they desire.
 - b. Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes in duration.
 - c. Ice-down towels for cooling.
 - d. Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.
 - e. Alter uniform by removing items if possible.
 - f. Allow for changes to dry t-shirts and shorts.
 - g. Reduce time of outside activity as well as indoor activity if air conditioning is unavailable.
 - h. Postpone practice to later in the day.
2. Contact sports and activities with additional equipment
 - a. Helmets and other possible equipment removed if not involved in contact or necessary for safety. If necessary for safety, suspend activity.
3. Recheck temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor for increased Heat Index.

If the Heat Index is above 104 degrees:

1. All Sports
 - a. Stop all outside activity in practice and/or play, and stop all inside activity if air conditioning is unavailable.

Educational Material for Parents and Students (Content Meets MDCH Requirements)

Sources: Michigan Department of Community Health, CDC and the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE)

UNDERSTANDING CONCUSSION

Headache	Not "Feeling Right"	Memory Problems	Haziness	Sensitive to Light
Balance Problems	Pressure in the Head	Feeling Irritable	Confusion	Fogginess
Sensitive to Noise	Double Vision	Nausea/Vomiting	Slow Reaction Time	"Feeling Down"
Poor Concentration	Sluggishness	Blurry Vision	Dizziness	Sleep Problems
Grogginess				

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A **concussion** is a **type of traumatic brain injury** that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a fall, bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. A concussion can be caused by a shaking, spinning or a sudden stopping and starting of the head. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. A concussion can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussions can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If the student reports any symptoms of a concussion, or if you notice symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away. A student who may have had a concussion should not return to play on the day of the injury and until a health care professional says they are okay to return to play.

IF YOU SUSPECT A CONCUSSION:

1. **SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY** – A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for the student to return to regular activities, including sports. Don't hide it, report it. Ignoring symptoms and trying to "tough it out" often makes it worse.
2. **KEEP YOUR STUDENT OUT OF PLAY** – Concussions take time to heal. Don't let the student return to play the day of injury and until a health care professional says it's okay. A student who returns to play too soon, while the brain is still healing, risks a greater chance of having a second concussion. Young children and teens are more likely to get a concussion and take longer to recover than adults. Repeat or second concussions increase the time it takes to recover and can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting the student for a lifetime. They can be fatal. It is better to miss one game than the whole season.
3. **TELL THE SCHOOL ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS CONCUSSION** – Schools should know if a student had a previous concussion. A student's school may not know about a concussion received in another sport or activity unless you notify them.

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Can't recall events prior to or after a hit or fall
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes

CONCUSSION DANGER SIGNS:

In rare cases, a dangerous blood clot may form on the brain in a person with a concussion and crowd the brain against the skull. A student should receive immediate medical attention if after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body s/he exhibits any of the following danger signs:

Slurred speech	Has unusual behavior	Convulsions or seizures	A headache that gets worse
Repeated vomiting or nausea	Cannot recognize people/places	One pupil larger than the other	Is drowsy or cannot be awakened
Becomes increasingly confused, restless or agitated		Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination	
	Loses consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously.)		

HOW TO RESPOND TO A REPORT OF A CONCUSSION:

If a student reports one or more symptoms of a concussion after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, s/he should be kept out of athletic play the day of the injury. The student should only return to play with permission from a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion. During recovery, rest is key. Exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration (such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games) may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse. Students who return to school after a concussion may need to spend fewer hours at school, take rests breaks, be given extra help and time, spend less time reading, writing or on a computer. After a concussion, returning to sports and school is a gradual process that should be monitored by a health care professional.

Remember: Concussion affects people differently. While most students with a concussion recover quickly and fully, some will have symptoms that last for days, or even weeks. A more serious concussion can last for months or longer.

To learn more, go to www.cdc.gov/concussion.

Parents and Students Must Sign and Return the Educational Material Acknowledgement Form

2025-2026 NORTH BRANCH AREA SCHOOLS
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

CONCUSSION AWARENESS

EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

By my name and signature below, I acknowledge in accordance with Public Acts 342 and 343 of 2012 that I have received and reviewed the Concussion Fact Sheet for Parents and/or the Concussion Fact Sheet for Students provided by Michigan High School Athletic Association
Sponsoring Organization

Participant Name Printed

Participant Name Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Name Printed

Parent or Guardian Name Signature

Date

Return this signed form to the sponsoring organization that must keep on file for the duration of participation or age 18.

Participants and parents please review and keep the educational materials available for future reference.

2025-2026 NORTH BRANCH AREA SCHOOLS PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

APPENDIX

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS

I hereby give my consent for my son/daughter _____ to participate in interscholastic athletics in the North Branch Area Schools Athletic Program during the year. Our family carries accident and/or health insurance with:

and are satisfied that this type of insurance gives sufficient coverage for participation in the interscholastic athletic program (information regarding insurance coverage can be obtained from the school office). We accept full responsibility for any injury that might occur to our son/daughter by reason of such participation, including medical bills that might rise in excess of any insurance coverage and are fully apprised that the North Branch Board of Education or any person associated with the school's athletic department are not liable under law and cannot legally accept responsibility and pay for such injury from the operating funds of the school district.

WARNING – By its nature, participation in interscholastic athletics includes a risk of injury which may range in severity from minor to long term catastrophic including loss of life.

Although serious injuries are not common in supervised school athletic programs, it is impossible to eliminate this risk.

Participants can have the responsibility to help reduce the chance of injury. **Players must obey all safety rules, report all physical problems to their coaches, follow a proper conditioning program, and inspect their own equipment daily.**

By signing this permission form, we acknowledge that we have read and understand this warning. **In order to participate in North Branch Area Schools Interscholastic Athletic Program the parent/guardian and student must sign and turn in this form.**

PARENT CONSENT FOR TRANSPORTATION

This is to certify that my son/daughter has permission to make all trips to games, contests, and tournaments during the school year with the North Branch Area Schools Athletic Teams. I understand that transportation will be by bus when practical and possible. Team size and type of contest may necessitate transportation by van or car driven by a licensed adult driver.

EQUIPMENT FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Each student-athlete in the North Branch Area Schools is responsible for his/her athletic equipment issued to them by the Athletic Department. This equipment is worn only for practices or competition in the sport for which it was issued. This equipment represents a large expenditure of money by the Athletic Department and is to be returned upon completion of the sport specific season (within one week). If equipment is stolen, lost or not returned, the student-athlete/parent will be held responsible for the cost of replacement of the equipment and must reimburse the Athletic Department before further equipment/uniform being issued.

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

Student-athletes, coaches, and parents should set a good example in the matter of sportsmanship. Unsportsmanlike conduct is never excusable.

1. Remember that a student spectator represents his/her school the same as the student-athletes.
2. The good name of your school is far more valuable than any game won by unfair practices or methods.
3. Respond enthusiastically to the call of your cheerleaders and yell in support of the team.
4. Express disapproval of poor sportsmanship on the part of either players or spectators.
5. Accept decisions of officials without questions.
6. Extend every possible courtesy to the visiting team, their cheerleaders and their followers.

NORTH BRANCH AREA SCHOOLS ATHLETIC POLICY AGREEMENT

NAME OF
ATHLETE _____ GRADE _____ DATE _____

STUDENT:

I have received and read the 2025-2026 Athletic Handbook. I understand that I am expected to follow the regulations contained therein and I agree to do so. As a participant in the Athletic Program I recognize my responsibility is to set a positive example for anyone who observes my behavior and performance. This includes the school day, community activities and my actual participation in athletic contests. I have passed a complete physical examination performed by a Physician, had my parent/guardian review and sign my physical card and have turned it in to the Athletic Director's office. I also understand that should I suffer a concussion, I must obtain unconditional clearance from a physician (MHSAA form) and also understand that both parent and I must sign the Post-Concussion Consent form.

Signature DATE _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN:

I have read the contents of the 2025-2026 Athletic Handbook and have read the agreement, which my son/daughter has signed. I agree to support the Athletic policies of the North Branch Area Schools and I have also reviewed by son's/daughter's physical examination card and have signed the form. I also understand that should my child suffer a concussion, I must obtain unconditional clearance from a physician (MHSAA form), and also understand that both my student-athlete and I must sign the Post-Concussion Consent form.

Signature DATE _____